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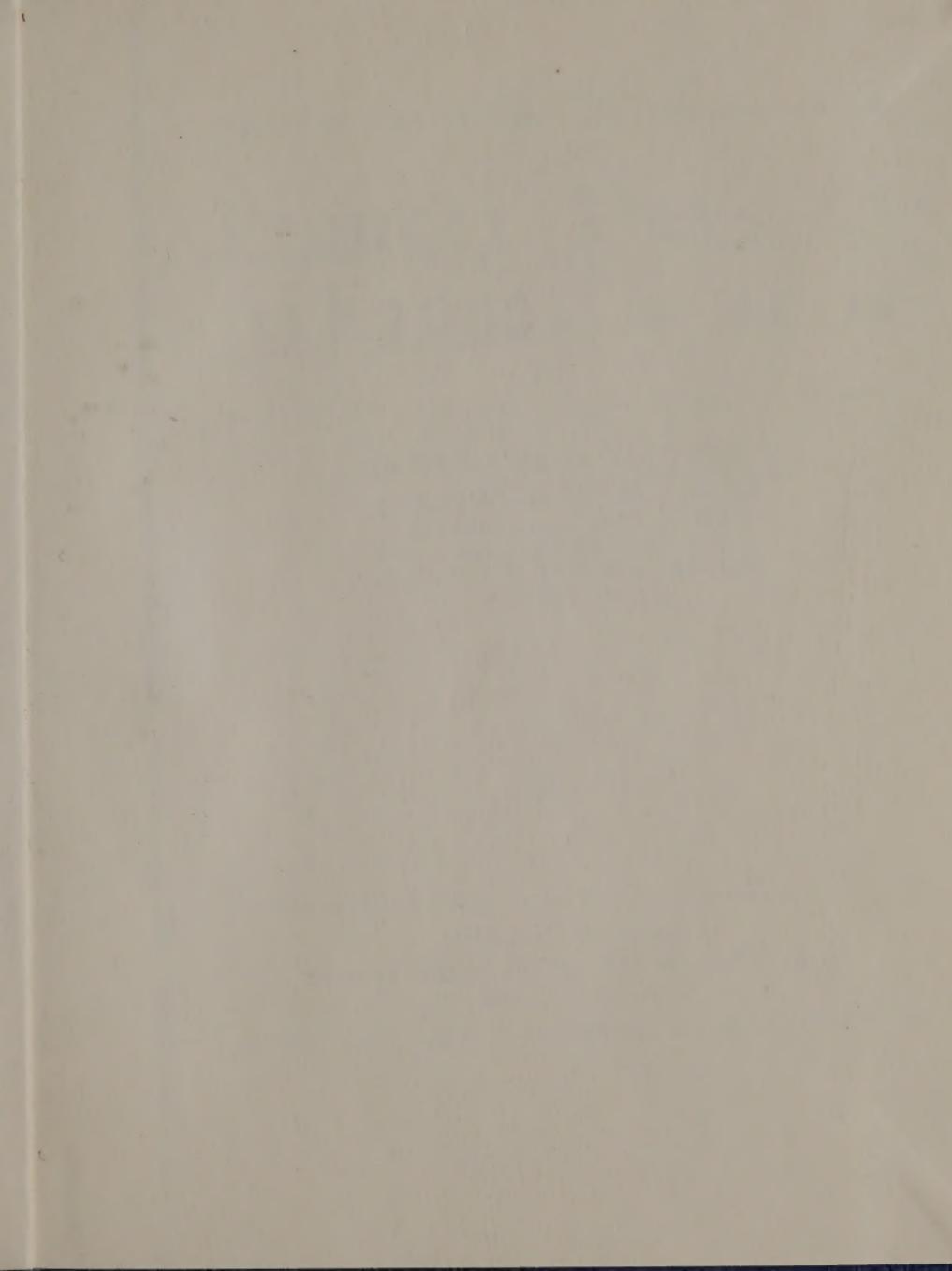
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# Pioneer Days in Arkansas, *etc. etc. etc.*

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By SAMUEL H. CHESTER

*Secretary Emeritus of Foreign Missions  
of the Presbyterian Church in the United  
States; Author of "Missions in the Far  
East"; "Thirty Years In a Secretary's  
Office"; Etc.*

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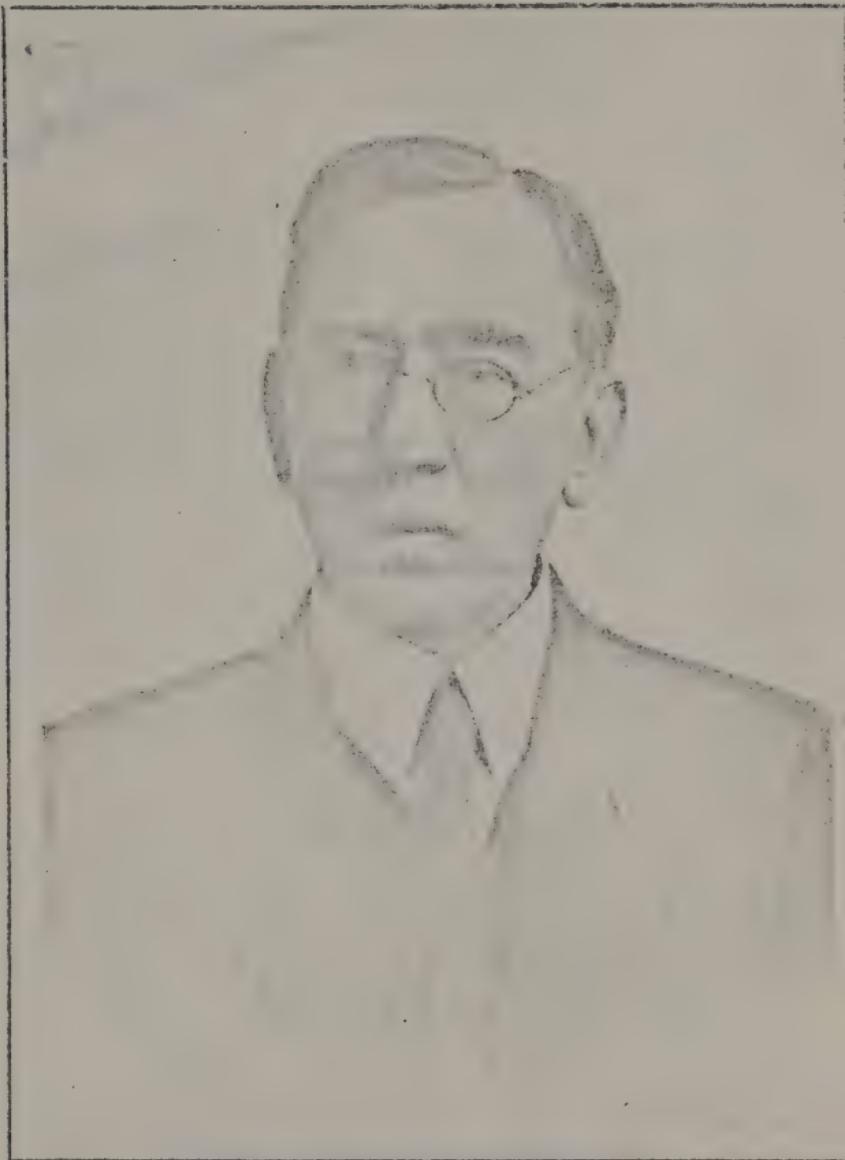
Pioneer  
Days  
in  
Arkansas

S. H. CHESTER

SAMUEL A. COLEMAN

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EDUCATIONAL  
EDUCATION  
in  
AUGUSTA  
E. H. CHESTER



SAMUEL H. CHESTER



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DEDICATED TO

ONE OF THE BRAVEST OF THE PIONEERS

*My Mother*

©~©



# Foreword

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I AM not conscious of being prompted by any specially altruistic motive in writing this story. It was begun to meet a felt need of some way to escape the burden of idleness, after having lifted from my shoulders the burden of labor and responsibility borne for over thirty years in connection with the mission work of our church. Being begun it was found so pleasant and interesting that it became difficult to keep the story within the limits of a readable length. The necessity of doing that made it impracticable to personate more of the pioneers as I should so much like to have done. Samuel Strain, who claimed me as his namesake, and who presented me as such with the cloth out of which my first trousers were made; John Crisp, at whose hospitable home there were frequent neighborhood gatherings to consume the forty-pound watermelons he was so successful in raising; Joseph Lewis, who could never resist the call of a hunter's horn in the early morning, no matter what the condition of his crop might be, and whose double-barrel gun was always good for a running deer at a hundred yards; Asa Morgan,



whose wide reading and marvelous memory would have made him a congenial member of any circle of literary men anywhere; Hamilton P. Smead, a brilliant physician and one of the handsomest men of his day, whose hospitable home was graced by a wife and five daughters every one of whom was a noted beauty in her day; Capt. Dews, a physical replica of Jefferson Davis, who officiated as sheriff at the execution of the famous outlaw, John A. Murrell, and whose three daughters and one son all married into one family of the McKaes. These and others whom I have not found space to mention individually were all worthy members of what I think this story shows to have been a colony in every way worthy of having its story put on permanent record.

The incidents given are partly matters of personal recollection and partly of neighborhood tradition. Some of them are taken from a manuscript left by my brother, Capt. W. Y. Chester, which he was prevented by failing health from putting in shape for publication before his death.

I wish also to make grateful acknowledgment of indispensable help given in both the preparation and criticism of the manuscript by Miss Margaret McNally, of Nashville, Tenn., and Miss Ruth Hays, of Black Mountain, N. C.

*Montreat, N. C.,  
June 15th, 1927.*



# Introduction

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IT was my privilege to read this book through twice while it was still in manuscript. Both times it gripped and held me from start to finish. For several reasons it has more than local interest.

The fact that its author was for more than thirty years Secretary of Foreign Missions in the Presbyterian Church in the United States and that he is widely known and loved, gives interest to anything that he writes. Not only so, but he knows how to tell a story. He has a keen sense of humor, a well-ordered imagination, and a good literary style. In addition to these gifts, he has a story that is worth telling. It is full of human interest and heroism.

There is valuable history in this little book which ought to be read not only by people in Arkansas, but by all who love our country and our church. For the Scotch Presbyterian settlement in Arkansas, of which this book tells, is typical of hundreds and thousands of Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterian settlements all over the country in those early days when our forefathers were busy building homes and schools and churches in the great American wilderness. Future generations will rise up and call Dr. Chester blessed for preserving this inspiring bit of Presbyterian history.

WALTER L. LINGLE.



# Contents

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	PAGE
I.	
THE FOUNDING OF THE COLONY . . . . .	9
II.	
HOME BUILDING . . . . .	16
III.	
CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS . . . . .	21
IV.	
THE OLD FIELD SCHOOL . . . . .	26
V.	
RELATIONS WITH OUR AFRICAN SLAVES . . . . .	33
VI.	
WAR TIME AND RECONSTRUCTION . . . . .	50
VII.	
AFTERWARDS . . . . .	65



# Contents

---

	PAGE
I.	
THE FOUNDING OF THE COLONY . . . . .	9
II.	
HOME BUILDING . . . . .	16
III.	
CHURCH AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS . . . . .	21
IV.	
THE OLD FIELD SCHOOL . . . . .	26
V.	
RELATIONS WITH OUR AFRICAN SLAVES . . . . .	33
VI.	
WAR TIME AND RECONSTRUCTION . . . . .	50
VII.	
AFTERWARDS . . . . .	65



## I.

# The Founding of the Colony

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THE Arkansas Pioneers of the early days who secured the largest publicity were those like the one immortalized in Col. Faulkner's story of the "Arkansas Traveler." The leaky log-cabin, the coon skin cap, the convenient jug, the three-stringed violin, and the roads that went nowhere were the outstanding features of the picture. In no true sense of the word, however, could these be called pioneers. They were either representatives of the hopelessly "down and out" class, seeking a livelihood in the sense of bare subsistence by gun and fishing tackle and looking to no future, or they were fugitives from justice from the older states seeking safe hiding places in the uninhabited wilderness.

This story has to do with those of a wholly different type, of which there were several colonies established contemporaneously in southern Arkansas. These came facing the hardships of pioneer life.



partly in the same spirit of adventure that brought their forefathers from across the sea, and partly for the sake of what would come to them and their children in the development of the country, and bringing with them into their log-cabin homes the ideals and ways of life of the best people of the older states.

It was on the border line of the counties of Union and Columbia, twenty miles from the Louisiana line and fifty miles from the Texas line, on a body of land purchased from the Government at a graduated price from 25c to \$1.25 an acre, that our pioneers established their home. The tribe of Choctaw Indians formerly occupying this region had been moved to their reservation in the Indian Territory, leaving it to the undisturbed possession of the wolves and bears and panthers and other smaller animals of prey, and the herds of beautiful red deer and flocks of wild turkeys that furnished these *carnivora* their food supply.

Even at the low price of land offered by the Government as an inducement to settlers, those of a desirable kind, discouraged by the reputation given to Arkansas by explorers like Col. Faulkner, were slow in coming in. This was especially true of that part of the State lying south of the Arkansas river. Although this offer had been standing since 1836 when statehood was achieved, it was not until the





COLIN McRAE



spring of 1843 that the first member of the Colony arrived. He was originally of the Highland Clan of middle North Carolina, and bore the good Highland name of Colin McRae. The emigrant party was composed of himself, his wife and three children, and several families of African slaves. A journey of about two months, by way of Mobile and across the gulf to New Orleans, then up the Red and Ouachita rivers, brought them to the river port within about twenty miles of their future home. The only road traversing that part of the state was the old military road built by the French from a point in Louisiana to their trading post in the Indian Territory. There were some blind trails (*Chemin-Couvert*—later Anglicized as “Smackover”), one of which gave its name to the now famous oil field of southern Arkansas. To reach their destination they cut a road through the virgin forest, over which the men traveled on foot, and the women and children and household supplies were transported in covered wagons.

The Government gave them a Post Office to which they gave the name Mount Holly, suggested by the abundance of holly trees whose beautiful dark green leaves and red berries were the most conspicuous feature of the forest landscape.

The food supply was at first precarious on account of the difficulty of transport, but some necessary



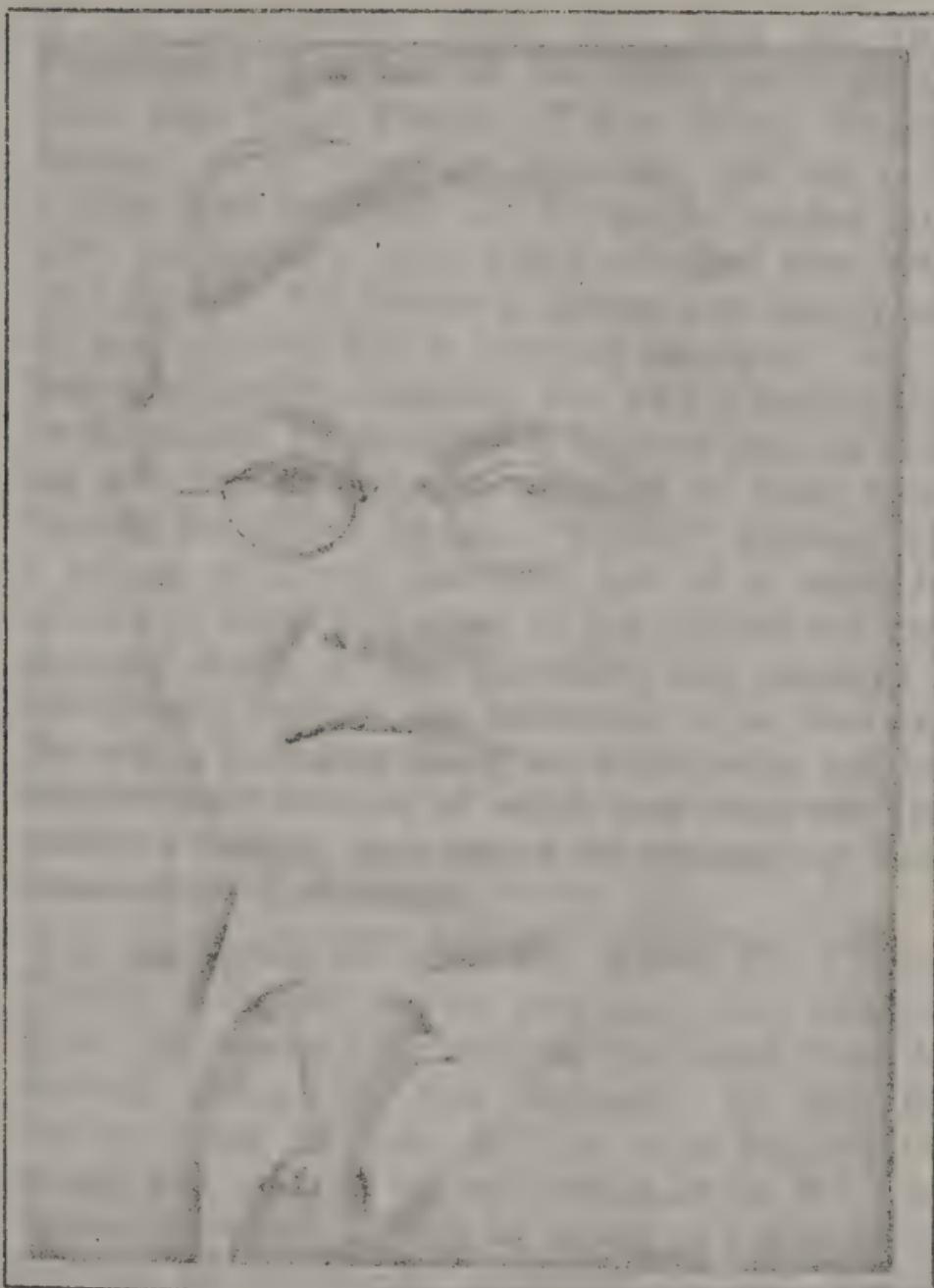
things had been brought along and it was possible by an accurate rifle shot to procure fresh venison or bear steak or a wild turkey within a half mile of the settlement at almost any hour of the day.

It was a lonely time for the wife and mother, but she was a woman of a brave heart and shared with her husband the true pioneer spirit, and her days were fully occupied in looking after the domestic necessities of the family and in keeping the children, white and black, from wandering into the danger zone of the outlying forest.

By the end of the first year about a dozen other members of the McRae clan had arrived, giving those of that name for all time a numerical preponderance and a controlling influence in the colony. They were a sturdy tribe, noted for business sagacity, incorruptible integrity, old-fashioned piety and the absence of any fear complex in their psychological make-up. One of the second generation of them has just completed his second term as Governor of the State, having previously served eighteen years in Congress, without having in all those years of political life to face a single charge affecting his integrity and honor.

An interesting accession to the colony was Col. Aylett Buckner, of Kentucky, the father of Simon Bolivar Buckner, known to fame as a Major-General





GOVERNOR T. C. McRAE



in the Confederate Army and later as Vice-Presidential candidate of the Gold party on the ticket with Judge Palmer, of New York. General Buckner never came to Arkansas, but an older brother came and lived with his mother on her farm after the father's death which occurred soon after their arrival. He became a famous bear hunter and on one occasion had a personal encounter with a bear which, after wounding him with a musket ball, he dispatched by thrusting a bayonet into his side, but was himself seriously wounded by being bitten through the calf of the leg. "Mother" Buckner was a woman of strong character and of a masterful spirit and when left alone in her widowhood took personal charge of her plantation and managed it successfully without the assistance of an overseer. She was a Kentucky Bluegrass housekeeper and her neighborhood dinners, of which bear meat was frequently a feature, were one of the outstanding social events of the community.

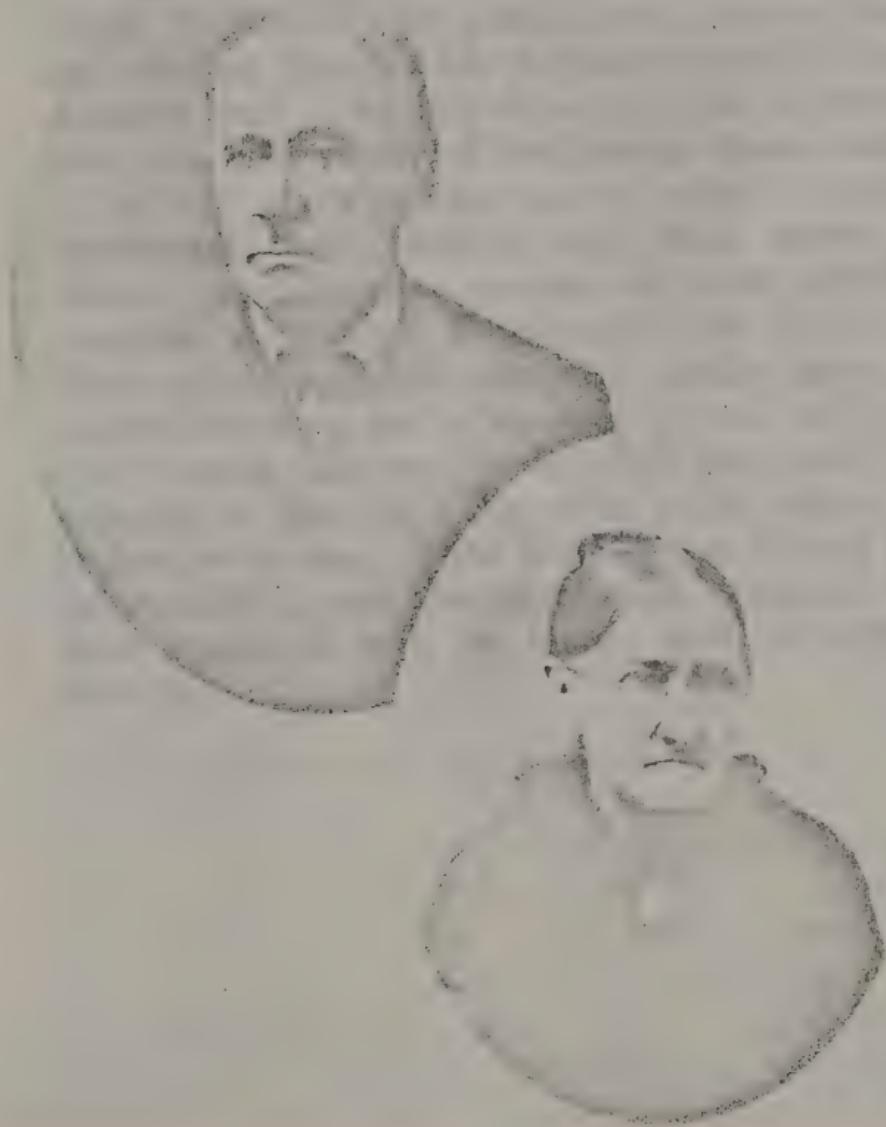
In the spring of 1845 my father, Dr. Charles Chester, with my mother and their four children joined the colony. He had just graduated from the Medical College of New Orleans. He was the brother-in-law of Colin McRae, who founded the colony and came at his solicitation to be the community physician. What he lacked of the technical training of present-day graduates of our medical



schools was in a measure compensated by a rich endowment of common sense, a seemingly intuitive gift of diagnosis and a remarkable ingenuity in meeting emergencies with the medical and surgical facilities available in that remote region at that early day. On one occasion, having to amputate a patient's leg, he performed the operation successfully with a knife made of a long file hammered to a double edge by the blacksmith and sharpened on a grind-stone. Physicians of that time do not seem to have had to deal with such a variety and multiplicity of germs as do those of the present day, and their simple pharmacopoeia of quinine, bluegimass, opium, castor oil and epsom salts sufficed for the relief of practically all the ailments with which they came in contact.

As there were no roads for vehicles my father's practice for several years was done on horse back, and as there were no bridges he was often obliged in answering a call in times of high water to swim the creeks, which he never hesitated to do if necessary. Sometimes he had to go long distances involving absences of two or three days. On such occasions my mother would gather the children around the fire in the evenings and tell them Bible stories to divert their attention from the howling of the wolves that would come in packs up to the house in answer to the family watch-dog's bark.





DR. CHARLES CHESTER AND "MOTHER" CHESTER



It was the educated and refined women who did not shrink from such experiences who, as helpmeets to their husbands, made possible the winning of the West. Fortunately my mother was a lover of books, and with her Bible, which she read regularly through seventy times, from her eleventh to her eighty-first year, and with copies of the leading classic authors of her day which in some way or other, in spite of remoteness from libraries and book stores, she always found means to procure, she never lacked for congenial company. Fortunately also there were other members of the colony of similar tastes and accomplishments, and when they visited each other their fireside talk was hardly what one would have expected to hear in a log-cabin in the almost unbroken wilderness. Their English was that of King James's Bible, and the topics they discussed were those connected with the history and literature of their day.



## II.

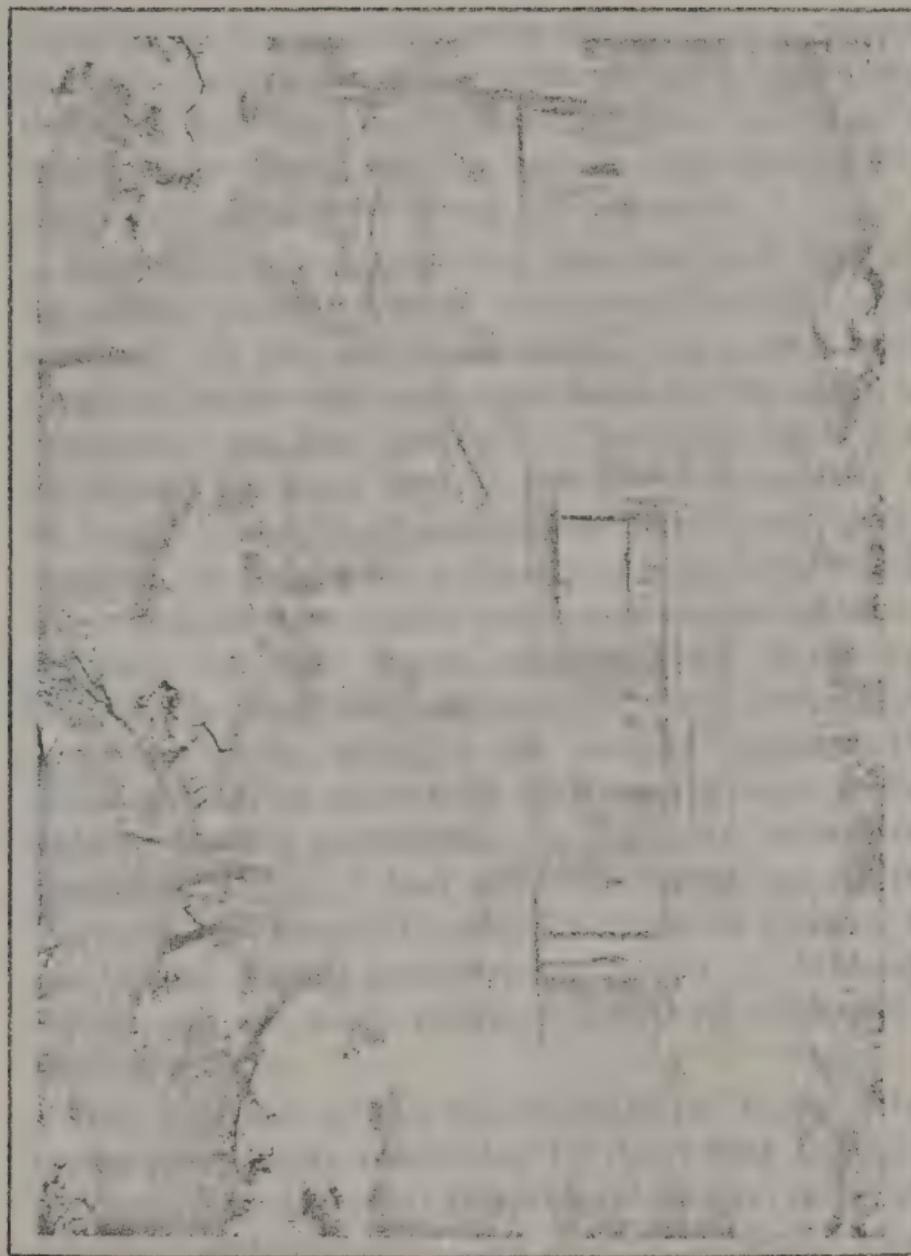
# Home Building

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BY the summer of 1845 our colony had increased to the number of seven households, including about twenty children. Owing to the manner of its selection the community was of a homogeneous character, the later arrivals having practically all come on the invitation of the earlier ones. Besides the ones mentioned above were the Wrights, the Morgans, the Strains and the Lewises. A little later came the Crisps, the McCalls, the Parkers and the Sineads.

Their common experiences of pioneer life had also drawn them closely together and generated a strong spirit of solidarity and co-operation. The building of a house was always a neighborhood affair, and all the homes were built on the same architectural plan. As the saw mill had not yet penetrated the wilderness they were necessarily built of logs. There were two large rooms with a wide passageway between, with shed rooms at the back and a full length covered porch in front. Separate detached cabins were built for kitchen, pantry and smoke houses, and also







dormitories for the children as the families increased, and for visitors when the number was greater than the main building would accommodate. Hospitality was without limit and no matter how many came room could always be found for one more.

In spite of their primitive character and furnishings these pioneer homes were not devoid of solid comfort. If one can sleep soundly on a well made cotton or straw mattress, what more can he do on an Ostermoor on box springs? Their big open fires of hickory logs are now in the older states only to be found in homes of wealth, as features of special comfort, or for artistic purposes in highpriced hotels. Their split-bottom chairs were more comfortable and sanitary for that warm climate than those upholstered in plush and leather would have been. They were especially adapted to leaning against the chimney wall in winter to read by the soft yellow light of blazing pine-knots. In that way, before my twelfth birthday, I had read the entire set of the Waverly Novels and Goodrich's Pictorial History of the United States, besides many books of children's stories and the more thrilling selections in the McGuffy Readers.

One hesitates to tax the credulity of those living under present-day conditions by describing the table fare of our pioneers after their homes were established and organized, not only occasionally when



company came, but all the time. Their negro cooks and house servants, holding their positions by life tenure, and having a natural genius for the things pertaining to their profession, were trained to a perfection only attained or attainable by those of their race in *ante-bellum* days in the South. Their gardens and orchards yielded in ample quantity all the fruits and vegetables of the temperate zone. Poultry of every variety swarmed in their barnyards. Their flocks and herds multiplied and kept fat on the open range three-fourths of the year, and on stored up provender the other fourth. In addition to these sources of supply the woods were full of game and the creeks were full of fish. When the cotton crop was harvested it was shipped to New Orleans and sold by the commission merchant, who purchased and sent back supplies of sugar and coffee and golden syrup and boxes of Dutch Cheese and of nuts and raisins, and all the ingredients for making and seasoning the kind of mince pie that is now in law-abiding communities only a regretful memory. The French chef of the New York hotels is not in the same class with the colored "Dinah" who handled these culinary materials, and with all his twentieth century appliances can produce no such results as she produced with her pots and pans and skillets and bread ovens, heated top and bottom with coals from the open wood fire.



The loneliness of plantation life was relieved by frequent interchanges of family visits, usually in the form of "spending the day." There were frequent night gatherings of the young people, at which they indulged in all varieties of amusements supposed to be not of a "worldly" character. Dancing was strictly *tabu*, but occasionally the floor of the wide passageway was utilized for a game of "twistification," which was not objected to, and which served to show how easy it is for people of the strictest principles to sophisticate their consciences on the subject of worldly amusements. It seems now in the retrospect of seventy years a thousand pities that the piety of the pioneers, which was sincere and unostentatious, did not allow, and even encourage, dancing among their young people at least in the form of the beautiful and graceful Cotillion and the Old Virginia Reel.

Such as they were those homes became the object of the devoted love and loyalty of those who grew up in them. \*One of the third generation, now in a foreign land, had this to say in one of her letters home: "I am often homesick for Mt. Holly. I long for the great trees with the grapevine swings; for Beech Creek where the ferns and the bay trees run riot, and the marsh birds answer each other in liquid

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\*Mrs. Elizabeth McRae Ross, missionary to Mexico.



notes. I long for houses with front porches covered with star jessamine vines, with well-scrubbed pine floors and windows with white muslin curtains. I want a front yard with moss roses, larkspur and honeysuckle in it, and a backyard with a smokehouse and a hickorynut tree. I long for a fireplace with a hickory log flaming in it, and the ring on my front steps of a neighbor's foot who comes on the pure mission of—"just a neighboring".



### III.

# Church and Sunday School

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AS the members of our colony with only two or three exceptions were Scotch Presbyterians, they proceeded at an early date to organize a Presbyterian Church and Sunday School. The Church and Sunday School were practically one, for the tradition is that every member of the Church attended Sunday School and every Sunday School pupil attended Church. The Church never had a large membership, but owing to its character and the quality of its work it exercised an influence on the community and the surrounding country out of all proportion to its numbers. Its "Alumni" became leaders in many other communities and churches that grew up in the development of the country, and some of them in the work of the Church at large both at home and abroad. It had a succession of able and scholarly men as pastors and supplies, concerning whom I regret that on account of limitations of space I can-



not speak individually. Of the first one, however, I will write briefly, because he was the first, and also because he was in some respects a unique and picturesque character. He was the Rev. W. S. Lacy, father of Stonewall Jackson's famous chaplain, Beverly Tucker Lacy, and grandfather of several distinguished ministers of that name of the Presbyterian Church of today. He was a man of striking personal appearance, elegant manners, and fine literary attainments. In his old age he lost his eyesight, but his memory was stored with literary treasures which made him independent of things in print. He could recite from memory the entire New Testament and many of the Psalms and other poetical parts of the Old Testament. He knew much of Shakespeare and Scott and all of Robert Burns by heart. He was not satisfied with the way Burns ended "John Anderson, My Jo" and composed a third stanza to the poem expressing the anticipation of the old couple of the continuance of their happy association in the life to come.

"John Anderson, My Jo, John,  
A joyful morn shall rise,  
And we will baith ascend on hie,  
To dwell abou' the skies,  
To join a glorious throng, John,  
Afar from sin and woe,  
And sing thegither the new song,  
John Anderson, My Jo."



He lived beyond his ninetieth year, retaining his mental faculties unimpaired. To a friend who met him out walking supported by a cane in each hand and inquired of his health, he replied, "Feeble, very feeble, but thank God I have begun to die at the bottom instead of the top."

In the letter from Mrs. Ross, quoted above, she says of the Church: "From its vantage ground on the hill it commands as of old the social and religious life of the people . . . . I am sure it will continue to send out those who will help to do the world's work. When I was there last summer a firm-lipped young mother stood up in Sunday School and repeated Romans 8:28. The tiny son who clung to her hand was named John Calvin, and he too lisped his memory text. The custom of giving memory texts was the custom of your father during his long superintendency, and is still kept up."

My father was superintendent of the Sunday School for forty-seven years, having also served in that capacity for fifteen years before coming to Arkansas. Our curriculum was the memorizing of large portions of the Scriptures, and all of the old classic hymns, and acquiring the knowledge of a complete outline of Bible history as set forth in Smith's Scripture Question Book. The answers to these questions had to be forth-coming under stress



of prizes at one end of the line and suitable punishment at the other end if necessary.

It was very rarely that the Superintendent failed to be present on Sunday morning at 9:00 o'clock to open his school. To accomplish this it was sometimes necessary to rise and begin his round of calls at 3:00 o'clock on Sunday mornings. When he died in 1893 his pupils had inscribed on his monument under his name the words: "The beloved physician, the friend of the needy, a lover of children and beloved by them, Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church and Sunday School Superintendent for sixty-two years; servant of Christ from childhood and faithful unto death; his record is on high and his works do follow him."

To the influence of this Church and Sunday School the following facts in the history of the community are no doubt largely to be attributed.

No permanent resident of the Mt. Holly neighborhood was ever convicted of a felony.

No whiskey was ever sold for beverage purposes in the community. All the land sold near its business centre had a prohibition clause in its deed of conveyance. Whether or not this clause would have stood the test of the courts, it was so unanimously supported by public sentiment as to prove entirely effective. In the only case of its attempted violation the offender had an experience which made it seem



to him expedient to disappear between dark and daylight and was never seen in the neighborhood again. Growing up in the community my first sight of a drunken man was in the second year of the demoralization caused by the civil war, when I was twelve years old.

Notwithstanding the prevalent ideas of that day as to the proper manner of dealing with personal insults and injuries, there was never a personal encounter in the community between two grown white men until after the civil war.

Finally, it is true today that among the descendants of our pioneers of the third and fourth generation it is rare to find those who are not characterized by a high moral earnestness and solidity of character.



# The Old Field School

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THE people of our colony were not all college bred, but they had book shelves in their log cabin homes on which, besides the publications of the American Tract Society, would be found the histories of Macaulay, Hume and Gibbon, the stories of Scott, Jane Austen and Hawthorne, the Essays of Lamb and Christopher North and the poems of Shakespeare and Burns and Longfellow and, last but by no means least, of Mrs. Felicia Hemans. No child was allowed to reach the age of ten in any family of the community without being able to recite her poem on the Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers. Reading aloud of evenings by some member of the family was a regular function on which attendance was not always optional. A book my father read to us in this way, and in which even as a child I was deeply interested, was Hugh Miller's "Testimony of the Rocks," which was supposed to have satisfactorily explained all the difficulties connected with the conflict that had recently emerged between Genesis and Geology.



One of the first concerns of such a community would naturally be to provide for the education of their children, which they did by establishing a classical school. Like all their buildings, their "Academy" was built of hewn logs. It had two doors and two windows on opposite sides. The teacher's desk and platform were at one end and an open fireplace at the other end. The cracks were left open in summer for ventilation, and daubed with mud to keep out the cold in winter. Rectangular boxes, open on one side and extending from a middle aisle to the wall on either side, and partitioned so as to allow about two and one-half feet for each pupil, served as desks for books and slates and writing material. The seats were blocks sawn from pine logs, of varying lengths to suit the sizes of the children, with a notch into which a plank was fitted with the proper slant for a back. A sample of these seats may now be seen at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, in the section allotted to Arkansas antiquities.

There was a neighborhood agreement that the teacher must be a college graduate and a member of the Presbyterian Church. The first teacher was the Pastor of the Church, an unfortunate arrangement in one respect, for the reason that in those days when stress was laid on corporal punishment as an incentive to study it was always a point of honor



with the pupils of the school to hate the teacher. Except in the case of one's own parents, it is not in the nature of boy or man to love a person by whom he has been thrashed. The thrashed schoolboy hates the teacher on his own account and the others hate him on their friends' and companions' account. But in after years, when those first pupils of the old pastor-teacher came to realize what he had done for them, there were some who would remember him with feelings of gratitude and affection. For he not only gave them mental training that laid the foundation for success in their chosen spheres of life, but instilled in their hearts a reverence for truth and honor and a hatred for everything mean. Moreover his discipline, while rigid to the last degree, was exercised more on the principle of retribution in kind than by the use of the rod. For instance, he kept always in his desk a supply of small sections of the bitter Jerusalem Oak weed, and when any pupil was detected chewing a wad of tobacco, or sweet gum rosin, or paper, he was called up and presented with a piece of this weed and required to chew it until it disappeared in his mouth. Tardiness or unsatisfactory recitations were punished by the delinquents being "kept in" during play time or after school hours. But for disobedience or disorderly conduct or the persistent missing of lessons, corporal



punishment was resorted to of the most drastic and thorough-going character.

My personal experience was with our second teacher, a young man fresh from college and at first greatly lacking in self-control, and therefore in the ability to control obstreperous pupils. Finally, however, he learned the lesson of self-mastery, and with it the art of winning his pupils' affection, and then there was nothing he could not do with them and that they would not try to do for him.

The school was co-educational, only for the reason that the community was not sufficiently advanced to sustain two schools. But while of necessity housed in the same building, the boys and girls were strictly prohibited from speaking to each other or holding communication in any way whatsoever. To prevent intermingling after school hours the girls were dismissed fifteen minutes in advance of the boys. It seems unaccountable that the futility of this scheme did not occur to the teacher without his having to learn it by experience. All the girls had to do was to regulate their walking so that within a quarter of a mile the boys would overtake them. In school hours, by various telepathic signs, they easily communicated to each other their personal attitudes, favorable or otherwise, so that every boy who had a sweetheart, as nearly all of them did, knew definitely whether or not his sentiments were reci-



procated. After a while these foolish restrictions were removed and the sexes mingled together in a comradeship and companionship which was as pleasant as it was wholesome and beneficial to both of them in every way. I can remember no time after I entered school at seven years of age when I was not desperately in love with some girl pupil, frequently one several years my senior in age and usually a different one at each recurring session. And the ambition to shine in class before the favored one, or to evoke her admiration of our manner of reading Hohenlinden, or of declaiming Patrick Henry's great war speech, was one of our greatest incentives to study and effort.

For ball games, instead of baseball and football, we had town ball and "cat," requiring nothing like the same amount of physical prowess, but having the advantage that much larger numbers could participate in them. Without presuming to suggest the abolition of football and baseball, one cannot help wishing success to President Lowell, of Harvard, in his effort to bring about such modifications in present day school and college athletics as will put an end to the division of the student body at play into an insignificant minority of performers and an overwhelming majority of mere spectators.

Occasional fighting was also one of our school sports, mostly done by the small boys at the instiga-



tion of the larger ones for their amusement. Some of the more civilized large boys inaugurated a movement to discourage fighting by having a rule adopted that any two boys who wished to fight must go off out of sight and have it out between themselves with no spectators and no by-standers to part them. The result was that the prospective combatants usually composed their differences before reaching the battle ground. Not always, however. It fell to my lot to have one fight under those conditions. As my athletic specialty was wrestling I closed with my adversary and we began a tussle which lasted several minutes, with no result except that both of us were getting short of breath. The situation was becoming critical for me when, to my intense relief, the proposition came from the other side to quit and call it a drawn battle. I answered, "all right" with alacrity, whereupon we shook hands and rejoined our companions on the play ground.

Like most aggregations of boys or men, our school had its bully, who was also, as is always the case, a coward. He was nearly grown in size and any single small boy was helpless in his hands. His habitual occupation during play hours was some form of imposition on the smaller boys. Finally his tyranny provoked a rebellion, as tyranny so often does. It was just before the Civil War, when many political meetings were being held, at which manifestos ex-



pressing defiance of our alleged oppressors were promulgated. One of these which some patriot posted on our school house door gave me a suggestion. I wrote on my slate a "Declaration of Independence" for the small boys, to the effect that "Whereas, A. B. has been guilty of long continued imposition on the smaller boys, resolved, that we are not going to submit to it any longer." About a dozen signed the declaration. At the afternoon recess our enemy began his usual procedure. I looked around for my signers and they began to gather. Presently one boy jumped on his back with his arms around his neck, the others grabbed his legs and arms and before he had time to comprehend what was going on he was lying flat on his back with limbs stretched out and covered with small boys like Gulliver in the hands of the Liliputians. One small boy was detailed to sit on his stomach and beat him in the face. Very soon his nose was bleeding, his lips were swollen and his eyes were bruised and black. All he could do was to beg for mercy, whereupon a council of war was called. It was decided that those holding his right arm should release it, and that he must hold it up and solemnly swear that he would forever thereafter leave the small boys alone. To his credit be it said that having taken the oath he kept it faithfully, and that as the result of



this experience his character seemed to undergo a complete and happy transformation.

When our school became known it drew patronage from all parts of Southern Arkansas and Northern Louisiana and Texas. It was a kind of log college for all that region, where the young people were cut off by their remoteness from the schools and colleges of the East. Its curriculum included all that was included in the usual college curriculum of that day except modern languages and the higher mathematics. In the classics it included a good deal more. When I went to Washington College in Virginia in 1869 I found that I had read all the Latin in the course except Tacitus, and that, instead of a few sample selections from the classic authors, I had read the entire eleven books of the *Aeneid*, all of Horace, all of Juvenal, all of Caesar's Commentaries of course, and all of Cicero's orations. On announcing this fact I was assigned the sophomore grade in Latin. Our first lesson was a lecture on the subjunctive mood, about which, or about any other of the fine points of grammar, I had heard very little at the Old Field School. The method there was to have us translate long passages of the Latin author, with the instruction, "work on it until your translation makes good sense. When it makes sense, you are apt to have it right." In that way we gradually mastered the vocabulary and absorbed a knowledge



of the idiom and could give a good account in English of what the Latin author meant, while knowing scarcely anything of the mysteries of mood and tense and construction in terms of the Latin grammar. And so, not appreciating the importance of the lecture on the subjunctive mood, I took no special pains to remember it, and when surprised a week later by being called to recite on it my ignorance was rather humiliatingly exposed. At our next recitation a passage from Tacitus was written on the board to be translated at sight. The passage was a difficult one, written in 'Tacitus' elliptical style, describing a night attack of the Germans on Caesar's camp. I had to supply some words mentally, which I did, making it make sense, and wrote it off correctly *currente calamo*. Next day I was accosted by the professor on the sidewalk and asked if I had gotten any help on my translation the day before. I replied with visible indignation, "No, what do you mean?" He replied, "You did not know anything about the subjunctive mood." "No," I said, "but I knew how to translate that passage of Tacitus and I can translate some more of it for you if you wish it." Convinced that his suspicion was unfounded he turned away with the remark, "Well, get your grammar and study up the subjunctive mood, and you and I will get along all right," which we did until two years later, when, thanks to my training



in the Old Field School, I graduated as a distinguished proficient in his Latin course.

By way of moral to the story, I may say that I would rather know what I learned at the Old Field School, to read hard Latin at sight, and know very little of the subjunctive mood, than to know all about the moods and tenses as taught in the grammar and not be able to read any Latin without the help of friendly notes and the dictionary. The combination of both accomplishments, however, would of course be better than either of them alone.

The days of the Old Field School are no more. A public free school system supported by taxation is an indispensable condition of the success of the democratic experiment in government. But on the other hand a public school system, from which the moral and religious teaching which was such a prominent feature of the old field parochial school are excluded, is being more and more found inadequate to insure peace and order and the public welfare in a democratic nation.

This raises the vexed question of the Bible in our public schools. It would unquestionably be a violation of the principle of religious liberty to require the teaching of our Protestant version of the Bible in the public schools and to compel the attendance of the children of all the citizens on such teaching. But is it not also a violation of this principle to proscribe

1886.]

the teaching of the Bible and religion in such a way that the great Protestant majority in this country cannot have their children taught Christian morality by teachers of their own selection in the public schools, which now in many places are the only schools available, the same right being accorded to the Roman Catholic and non-Christian minority, the attendance of the children in both cases being optional?

In this connection the two following statements quoted by Dr. W. W. Moore in his masterly discussion of this subject in "The Indispensable Book," would seem to be in point. Judge Grosscup, of Chicago, in rendering a legal decision had this to say: "The only blot on the American public schools is the exclusion of spirituality as one of the great facts of the world. The law admits Darwin, admits science, and admits all facts except the supreme fact that religion is the fundamental influence in all movements of mankind. As long as America turns its back on religion and the existence of God—the perfect message given by Jesus Christ—it is excluding the most powerful influence for good, both spiritual and civil, that the world has at its command."

Even Prof. Huxley, bitterly prejudiced though he was against the Bible, said: "I have always been strongly in favor of secular education without



theology, but I must confess that I have been no less seriously perplexed to know by what practical measures the religious teaching, which is the essential basis of moral conduct, is to be kept up in the present utterly chaotic state of opinion on these matters without the use of the Bible."



# Relations with Our African Slaves

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I HAVE no apology for the institution of slavery, as it existed in the South before the Civil War, or anywhere else in the world at any time in the world's history. All intelligent Southerners are glad that it is sixty years behind us, even more for the slave-holder's sake than for that of his former slaves. Apart from the question of its morality or immorality it is an institution inherently susceptible of cruel abuse, and my blood boils now when I remember some of the abuses of it I personally witnessed in my boyhood days. But these abuses were the exception and not the rule among the slave owners generally. And they were practically non-existent among those of the little colony with which this story is concerned, and of many others like it all over the Southern States.

My father was the owner of about a dozen slaves. Some members of our colony owned as many as



thirty or forty. They were housed in the same kind of one room log cabin that the boys of the family and any surplus visiting friends were housed in. In winter they were clothed in the manner required for their comfort and health, as both the self-interest and the humanity of their owners dictated. They were fed abundantly from the same vegetable garden and the same smokehouse and storeroom that supplied the family table.

In the following incidents, illustrating our relations with them I use only their given names, as they did not usually assume surnames until after emancipation. As titles of respect the older ones were called "Uncle" and "Aunt."

Andrew was the son of an imported African. He was very bright mentally and a very fine specimen of physical manhood. The children of the family taught him to read and write and he soon learned enough arithmetic to keep accounts. He was proud and high-spirited and could never be brought to recognize anyone but his owner as in authority over him. As my father's medical practice kept him much away from home, and because of Andrew's character and intelligence, he was installed as foreman of the plantation. He was allowed a piece of ground to cultivate for himself on which he usually raised about two bales of cotton, which were sold with the plantation crop and the proceeds applied.



in part to the purchase of a Sunday suit of clothes, and in part to the purchase of flour and molasses, out of which his wife made ginger-cakes which were sold at a handsome profit to the children of the Old Field School. On Sunday mornings he usually appeared dressed for church in his broadcloth suit and silk top hat and white starched shirt and high collar, in spirit and appearance, except for his color, a veritable gentleman of the old school. He was in every way a much superior man to some of his race that figured as members of Congress and Governors of States in reconstruction days. What became of him after emancipation we never knew. His wife belonged to a neighbor who refugeeed with his slaves to Texas during the war and he was sold to go with his wife, and never returned to Arkansas. The custom of selling their slaves promiscuously and separating families was one which did not prevail in our colony.

True, he did not represent a very numerous type, but on almost every Southern plantation there would be one or more like him whose relation to their owner had little more of slavery in it than the name.

Andrew had a brother named Manuel, who was lazy and good-for-nothing and a great night prowler. He must have sat for the picture on the box top of Mason's blacking. He was our shoe-black and in imagination I can see him now as he sat in front of



his cabin on Sunday morning with his shoe brush, brushing and nodding alternately. He was a thief and one night broke into the village store. Hearing footsteps approaching he tried to make his exit through the back window, but after making his jump found himself fast stuck in an open barrel of tar. The only thing about him that suggested any association with the good was that he died young, before the day of emancipation, and thereby escaped finishing his career in the State prison.

Uncle Sam was a native African, old and infirm as I first remember him. His shoulders were stooped and his hair and whiskers were white, and emphasized by contrast the blackness of his skin. His teeth were also white and perfectly preserved, and as they stood out conspicuously from his prognathous jaw gave an almost animal aspect to his general appearance. He never learned to speak English except in a broken and almost unintelligible way. All the children were mortally afraid of him, and although we could not resist the temptation to tease him occasionally all he had to do was to turn and jabber at us to put us to ignominious flight. His job was to drive up the cows from their range in the woods and separate them from their calves for their milking. On one of these expeditions he got lost and wandered about in the woods for a week with nothing to eat but roots and berries, and, as he declared, so



frightened at night by the screaming of panthers and the howling of wolves that he did not sleep at all.

He seemed to know instinctively when his time to die had come, and, not wishing to be annoyed by deathbed attentions, went into the woods and lay down at the root of a tree and died.

Supposing such as he to be brought to this country from Africa it is a fair question what would become of them if left to their own resources with no one to take care of them.

My most intimate friend and companion was a boy of my own age, named Alex, with whom I roamed the fields and woods in search of mischief and adventure, and hauled nuts from the woods at Christmas time in a wagon of our own manufacture, with a goods-box body and black gum wheels, with a yoke of unbroken yearlings which could only be held in parallel position by tying their tails together. Our friendship was cemented by many a joint experience of castigation when we were caught, as was often the case, co-operating in some flagrant misdemeanor.

"Uncle" Berryman was my mother's gardener and was a horticultural artist. In his half-acre garden, every vegetable of that climate grew under his tillage in perfection. His beds were arranged in symmetrical squares and bordered with roses and pinks and geraniums and heliotrope, and his garden fence was covered with the yellow jessamine vine, which in the





UNCLE BERRYMAN (OUR GARDENER)



early spring lit up the entire scene with a blaze of glory. Although illiterate, he was a Virginia gentleman of courtly manners and of keen native wit. He was also very religious, and in talking with the young people, white and black, much of his conversation was on that subject. In his preachments to us he dealt largely in the terrors of the law. One of his theological tenets was that up to nine years of age our parents were responsible for us, but that after that if we died without being converted we would certainly be lost. Accepting his view of the matter without question, I remember that I looked forward almost with terror to the day when I would be nine years old.

An old woman belonging to my uncle whom we called "Granny," held the view that the age of responsibility was twelve years, and when my brother one morning proudly announced to her his twelfth birthday, he was greeted with the reply, "Yes, jis ready now to die and go to hell!"

Bill was a young man of sportive disposition. He was fond of playing his banjo for the other negroes to dance by, and was thereby a grief of mind to Uncle Berryman. One evening Uncle Berryman climbed to the top of his cabin for his evening prayer, made in a voice that could be heard across the yard. He prayed first for every member of the family by name, and then paid his respects to Bill as follows:



"Lord, hab mercy on dat dar Bill, for thou knowest he's a torn down rahscal."

He served as body servant to my older brother in the War, having frequent opportunities to obtain his freedom by escaping to the Federal lines of which he never soothed to avail himself.

After the war, under our "Carpet-Bag" regime, the negroes were often incited to assert their alleged withheld rights by violence if necessary. The result was a constant succession of alarms and rumors of uprisings. It happened one night that all the family had gone from home except myself, and that late in the afternoon a rumor was circulated of a threatened uprising that night. I did not believe it, but naturally felt some anxiety and decided to sit up and read instead of going to bed. Sitting with my gun across my lap I read until about 2:00 o'clock in the morning, when I heard footsteps coming up to my door which opened on the backyard. I could not imagine for what friendly purpose anyone would be coming to my room at that hour, so I stood up, gun in hand, and answered the visitor's knock by an invitation to come in. Uncle Berryman opened the door, and as he saw my attitude exclaimed: "What is you doin' wid dat dar gun?" I answered, "Well, Berryman, what are you doing at my room door at 2:00 o'clock in the morning?" He had seen my light shining through the crack of his cabin a hundred yards



away, and thinking I must be sick, or that something must be wrong, had come to see about it. Somehow, I could never feel any more uneasiness about the uprisings, and if anyone had attempted to do me harm, I feel sure that Berryman would have answered my call for help and would have risked his own life in my defense.

Willis, our house boy, was of a physical type that has been made famous in the picture of the "Gold Dust Twins." He had a very black skin and very white teeth and a mouth like a large red rose. He had great self-confidence, and when told that the war was over and that he was free, he went immediately to the county seat to interview the new officials in the hope of getting into politics. Not succeeding in this, he returned home and announced to Uncle Berryman his purpose to enter the gospel ministry, whereupon the following conversation ensued:

Uncle B.: "What is you gwine preach about? You don't know nuthin' to preach."

Willis: "Yes, but de Lawd said he'd be mouf and wisdom unto me."

Uncle B.: "Well, he sho gi' you mouf, but I ain't seen whar he gi' you any wisdom yit."

Willis spent about a year seeking employment in some gentleman's occupation, but had finally to return to the one for which he was trained. With the politeness and graciousness of manner character-



istic of his race, he had no superior as a house servant. As long as he lived he paid periodical visits to the old home and never ceased to regard himself as a member of the family.

Jacob was for many years a trusted family servant of my uncle, Colin McRae, and allowed free access to everything about the house. He was ostentatiously pious and an important member of the colored Baptist Church. But after emancipation he fell from grace and stole a hog. He was called up for consultation as to what might be done about it, for it was a matter of family distress, and the following conversation ensued:

Mr. McRae: "Well, Jacob, I am very sorry, but I have lost confidence in you."

Jacob: "Well, Marse Colin, I *ain't los confidence in you yit.*"

The appeal was irresistible and through the family intercession he was saved that time from the clutches of the law. He proved unable, however, to resist similar subsequent temptations and had finally to go to the penitentiary.

The relations of master and slave that I have been describing were practically universal on the smaller plantations, where the owner and the sons of the family acted as inanagers. It was on the larger estates where "overseers" were employed, that the abuses referred to were chiefly found. The profes-



sion of overseer was regarded as incompatible with social respectability, and by the negroes they were both hated and despised. There was only one farm in our community on which an overseer was employed, and the way he was regarded by both white and black, was revealed in this incident:

His name (which I venture to give because he was never married and it now has no living representative), was Robert Goodwin--familiarly called "Bob Good'n." On one occasion a woman on the place applied for admission to the Baptist Church and according to the requirements of that Church she was asked to relate her experience of conversion to the congregation. Her account ran about as follows:

"One day I was walkin' across de field and stumped my toe and fell down and said 'damn it.' When I got up I felt awful bad and went and axed Ole Missis what mus' I do. Ole Missis said, 'go pray.' I went and prayed and kep' on prayin' till at las' I felt sho' de Lawd had forgive me." She was then asked if she had any hard feelings against anybody. She answered, "No, I believes I loves ev'body. I love Ole Missis and Ole Marster and Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Marse Henry and all de good folks heah in de church. I loves ev'body cep'n 'tis Bob Good'n." The exception was sustained and she was unanimously voted in.



Between one of our slaves named Rob and our entire family there was a devoted attachment that survived the war and lasted until the day of his death. He was the companion of our coon hunts and many a night sitting at the root of a tree up which a coon had taken refuge, waiting for day-break to cut the tree, Rob entertained us with "Uncle Remus" stories which his forebears had brought from Africa long before Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus had been heard of. There were some variations in the stories, but they belonged to the same African folk lore.

For several years after the war we had an "Army of Occupation" which ran true to form, marching over the country and taking what they wanted without consent or compensation. My father had a handsome black horse named "Rebel" which he rode in his medical practice and which was a great family pet. One day Rebel was standing hitched at the front gate when a company of soldiers passed by. Without asking any questions they took him along with them. That afternoon Rob failed to report for his usual work about the house, and we wondered if he had at last forsaken us and gone over to the enemy. But next morning about sunrise he appeared on Rebel's back, who was breathing heavily and flecked with foam. He had followed the soldiers on foot twenty miles to where they were camped for the





"R O B"



night. He concealed himself till everything was quiet and the lights were out, and then quietly unhitched the horse and sprung on his back and started at a gallop for home. There was a broad grin on his face when he arrived, and the welcome he received was of course enthusiastic. This act of devotion to the family interest was done at the risk of his life, for of course if he had been discovered, he would immediately have become the target for a fusillade of musket balls.

And so these good people solved their race problem. And only so can the much more difficult and complicated race and class problems that abound in all parts of the earth be solved, by the privileged classes, so long as there are privileged classes, exercising their privilege in a spirit of justice and kindness to those holding the unprivileged position.



## VI.

# War Times and Reconstruction

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THE hitherto unbroken harmony of our community was rudely interrupted when the election of Abraham Lincoln on the platform of the new Republican party, demanding the prohibition of slavery in the territories and classing it with polygamy as "the twin relic of barbarism," at once precipitated the secession movement in the South. At first there was much division of sentiment, several states declining to follow the lead of South Carolina, Mississippi and Alabama. Arkansas was one of the last to secede, and throughout the War contained a large Union element in the territory north of the Arkansas river. In Southern Arkansas Secessionists were in the majority, but there were many Union men up to the time of Lincoln's call for troops to invade the South. My father was one of these, believing that the South could maintain its rights more effectively contending for them in the Union than out of it.



The Secessionists were aggressive and intolerant, and the gatherings of our men under the trees in the church yard on Sundays before and after service which had always been in one harmonious group, were now in two groups in very critical attitudes to each other. No quarrels or collisions occurred, but these were only avoided by those of different sentiment keeping aloof from each other.

In the Old Field School, however, it was different. The Secession boys with their blue cockades taunted the Union boys who would not wear them, with being "yankees," with the result that our play grounds were largely turned into fighting grounds, and that sometimes so many would be engaged that the occurrence took the form of a general *mélée*.

But the outbreak of the War at once restored peace to the community. Very few Union men were left anywhere in Southern Arkansas. Both of my grown brothers enlisted in the Confederate army. One of them served through the war as Commissary for General Tappan's brigade. The other who was a student at Washington College, Virginia, joined the Liberty Hall Volunteers, the company composed of the student body, and served under Stonewall Jackson until killed in action in the battle of Spotsylvania in 1864. Practically all the boys of our community who were of military age went to Virginia and joined the 3rd regiment of Virginia Volunteers, and more



than half of those who went were either killed or died in camp or were in some way maimed for life.

During the War no great battles were fought west of the Mississippi. Absence of railroads and bridges and the frequent impassibility of the dirt roads would have made it impossible to manoeuvre large bodies of troops or to keep them supplied with food and war materials. The few minor engagements fought were all but one in northern Arkansas. The sufferings entailed by the War on our community were therefore chiefly mental. The anxiety of the mothers for their sons at the front; the days of mourning as word would come that one after another had fallen in battle, and the farewells as one after another of the younger ones reached the age of enlistment,—these were things that made the war even for us a sad and bitter experience.

There were also bands of brigands known as "jayhawkers" which made frequent raids, stealing horses and robbing those who had money and sometimes murdering those against whom they had a private grudge. They usually wore the Confederate uniform and when asked to give an account of themselves claimed to belong to Joe Shelby's cavalry brigade. In that way that brigade, which was a band of gallant men led by one of our most gallant and efficient cavalry officers, became the target of the poetical humor of an infantryman, between whom



and the cavalry there was always more or less jealousy. He substituted for the first two lines of "Maryland, My Maryland"

"Joe Shelby's at your stable door,  
Where's your mule? O where's your mule?"

Occasionally the Jayhawkers "came for wool and went home shorn." One day Captain Meek, an officer in Shelby's brigade, came on a short leave to see his family. While they were at dinner four men in uniform rode up, two on each side of the house, and opened fire through the dining room windows. They proved bad marksmen, the only damage being that one ball hit a water pitcher and a fragment of the broken pitcher hit the Captain in the chest. He at first thought that it was a bullet and that he would find himself mortally wounded, but rose and ran out into an open passageway and took down from a rack over the door a loaded double-barrelled shotgun and emptied the contents into the body of one of the men on each side of the house, whereupon the other two precipitately fled. Seeing one of them fall to the ground his little son, twelve years old, ran out and seized his army rifle and brought it to his father. He had no occasion to use it, however, as both the fallen men had twelve buckshot on the inside of them and the other two were gone.



One day my father had ridden out to his farm and was taking refuge from a shower under a tree, when four men rode up dressed in Confederate uniform, and made some inquiry about the road. One of them insisted on lending my father his overcoat, saying that the rain would not hurt him as he was accustomed to riding in wet clothes. On leaving they went to the home of Major E. W. Wright, one of the elders of our church, who had been reported to them as having some gold money concealed about his house. They asked and were given lodging for the night. After supper two of them asked their host to go with them to the front gate where their horses were hitched, the other two remaining inside with the family. On reaching the gate they told him they had come for his money. He told them he had none. They said they thought they could prove that he had, and put a halter around his neck and led him up to the horse rack, threatening him with instant death if he made any outcry. Then they hung him up and let him down several times, until finally, believing him to be dead, they called their companions in the house and rode away. After they had gone one of the sons went out to look for his father and found him hanging by a leather halter to the horse rack. When taken down he was unconscious but his heart was still beating and after a while, by vigorous massage, he was resuscitated. What saved



him was that he had a long, bony, corrugated neck to which the halter did not adhere closely enough to cut off the circulation. A posse was formed next day which pursued the robbers for two days, finding traces of them in many places but never coming up with them.

These bands of horse thieves and highwaymen with connecting centers of communication from Missouri to Texas, carried on their operations with little interference from either the civil or military authorities. And so, while we could not compare our war experiences with those of the people who suffered at the hands of Sheridan in Virginia or of Sherman in Georgia, ours were sufficiently unpleasant to enable us to sympathize with those who learned by experience from General Sherman what war actually is.

As for our food supply as our country was not devastated by the marching to and fro of contending armies, we had an abundance of such things as we could raise at home. The Federal blockade cut us off from all imported luxuries such as sugar and coffee and the delicacies we had been accustomed to purchase in New Orleans. Our warm drink was a decoction of parched rye or sweet potatoes or corn meal, sweetened with a semi-acid syrup made from the sorghum cane. When this syrup was first introduced it was hailed as a solution of our Con-



federate food problem, as it was alleged to contain the nourishing elements of several other kinds of food. It was boiled in iron pots, however, and its acid qualities introduced another complication. Those who used it freely began to find their teeth blackened and their gums inflamed and the lining of their stomachs in an irritated condition, and there was thus one more added to the list of our many disappointed hopes.

My father, in his strenuous life, had always been very dependent upon his coffee, and after two years' experience of the blockade substitutes decided that he could endure them no longer, and hired a man to drive a wagon across the state of Texas into Mexico and bring back a load of coffee. After about two months it was reported one afternoon that the coffee wagon would arrive the next morning. My mother had a pine plank table built across the yard and invited the entire neighborhood to come to a coffee drinking that afternoon. Though only thirteen years old I remember vividly what a delicious flavor the "sure enough" coffee had. All drank freely of the unaccustomed beverage, some taking three or four cups. Next day inquiries were passed around the neighborhood, "Did you sleep any last night?" It developed that practically the entire neighborhood had lain awake all night.



For clothing the men and boys wore grey jeans and the women and girls cotton dresses of many attractive patterns, spun and woven by themselves. We procured from South Carolina some seed of the long staple Sea Island cotton, from which they made a domestic almost as fine as linen. My brother and I had one Sunday suit not made of grey jeans. In one of our log-cabins there was a billiard table, about which nobody cared after all the men were gone to the war. Finally, that it might come into some use the green cloth top was taken off and made into two suits of boys' clothes. With their brass buttons given us by the soldiers these suits created a sensation when we appeared in them at Church and Sunday School.

Propaganda was not a new discovery of the World War. We had it in abundance in the sixties. It was used in 1861 to inflame the nationalistic (in that case sectionalistic), spirit and bring the people up to the fighting mood for the war the politicians had brought about. Great meetings addressed by spell-binding orators were held at which all kinds of wild and foolish things were said, as for instance, that one Southern man could whip five Yankees anywhere on the public road. One of those who figured in this capacity in our community was John R. Fellows, afterwards famous as a New York lawyer and politician. He was known as "the boy orator," being



then only nineteen years old. He once spent a night in our home, and I remember that he talked the entire time as though he were delivering a carefully prepared oration.

During the war our censored press published only such things as the authorities thought would keep up the people's *morale*, regardless of their truth or falsehood. Consequently we of the trans-Mississippi department knew practically nothing of what was happening in the east except what came to us in private letters. The newspapers gave us, under flaming headlines, accounts of an unbroken series of victories of Lee and Jackson and Johnston and Beauregard. So completely were we kept in the dark that three days before Appomattox my father sold for Confederate money ten out of twenty bales of long staple cotton that had accumulated during the war and that on the day Lee surrendered was worth \$1.00 a pound in gold. That Lee could be defeated, or surrender, was something we had scarcely dreamed of as a possibility.

But Lee did surrender. An era in our country's history was closed, and it remained for our people to adjust themselves to the new one that was about to be ushered in.



## RECONSTRUCTION

The first problem confronting us after the collapse of the Confederacy, and with it of all of our State and County Governments, was that of our relations with our former slaves. With people of communities like ours who had won the affection of their slaves by just and kind treatment the problem would have been easy if there had been no outside interference. Most of them at first remained with their former owners and began working under contract for wages instead of as before for their "victuals and clothes." The sons of the family went to the field and worked with the employed freedmen, maintaining the same kindly relations as before emancipation. During this period I ploughed, hoed and picked cotton as one of the regular "field hands," helped to clear the primeval forest to provide more ground for raising the high-priced cotton, split rails for fencing and drove the ox team that hauled our imported supplies from the river port twenty miles away.

The trouble began when the new "Reconstruction" measures adopted by Congress came into operation. We had no such orgy of corruption and practical anarchy as they had in South Carolina, because the proportion of negroes to white people was not so large, and possibly because the radical leaders then



in power did not consider us as having attained quite the same degree of political criminality.

But we had, first of all, the Freedmen's Bureau. The officers of this institution were usually appointed on the nomination of Congressmen of the Thaddeus Stevens type, and represented the views and ideals of that element in Congress. They gave the negroes to understand that they had come to "take care" of them, and encouraged them to report to the Bureau every grievance, large or small, which they might have against their former owners. One of our former slaves whom my mother employed as a cook, and who had an ungovernable temper, one day got into a great passion and threatened to poison the family. On being dismissed she went to the Bureau and reported her grievance. Next day she returned with a note from the agent to my father, reminding him that the bearer was a lady, and must be treated as one, and not "insulted" by any member of the family, on penalty of the arrest and prosecution of the offender. Her disappointment on being dismissed a second time instead of being restored to her position on the basis of the letter was pathetic. A short time afterwards, however, she returned deeply penitent and begged to be taken back into the good graces of the family, and remained with us several years without ever giving further trouble.



One of our neighbors, Dr. H. P. Smead, one morning received a visit from an agent of the Bureau who wished to interview him concerning a complaint lodged by one of his hired freedmen. He was warned that he must do certain things and must not do certain things in dealing with his colored employees. Dr. Smead was a high-spirited man, and his reply, characteristic of the prevalent state of mind of our people, was to reach for his shot-gun and order the agent to leave the premises immediately. He left, but returned next day with a company of soldiers to arrest the offender and to take him to prison. When he arrived, however, his intended victim was "not at home."

The result of the operations of the Bureau, regardless of the good or bad intentions of its agents, was to spoil the freedmen by filling their minds with false expectations of what the government was going to do for them, and to destroy their kindly relations with their former owners. It was, therefore, the reverse of helpful in solving the problem of the times.

Then we had the "*Carpet-Bagger*." Many of these were irresponsible adventurers, coming down from the North and taking possession of the state and county offices of the Reconstruction governments set up by Congress, and making themselves obnoxious to the disfranchised white people in every possible



way. One of the best of them, Albion W. Tourgee, of Connecticut, who figured as Federal Judge in North Carolina for several years and had many interesting experiences with the Ku-Klux-Klan, wrote a very interesting book after his return to the North entitled "A Fool's Errand by One of the Fools."

The response to these measures all over the South was the Ku-Klux-Klan, the Pale Faces, the White Brotherhood, and the Knights of the White Camelia, all of them secret oath-bound organizations, differing in minor features but with the same general character and purpose. This was "to protect our people from indignity and wrongs; to succor the suffering, particularly the families of dead Confederate soldiers; and to protect the people from unlawful seizures and from trial otherwise than by jury." The courses run by these orders depended on the character of their leaders. Some of them had reckless men at their head and ran speedily into courses of violence and crime, which led ultimately and inevitably to their prosecution and extirpation by the Federal Government. Many innocent men suffered with the guilty in these prosecutions, usually because of their refusal to give evidence against their comrades, whose conduct, however, they might wholly disapprove. Others of them remained under control of sane and responsible leaders who would not countenance criminal proceedings of any kind.



and served an indispensable purpose of self-protection to the intelligent and respectable element among the disfranchised white people, against whom all the powers of the existing government seemed for a time to be directed to humiliate and ruin them.

Our community adopted the Knights of the White Camelia, and into that order I was initiated at the age of sixteen by the pastor of our church. When the ceremony of initiation was finished and my blind-fold removed I looked around and saw all the elders and deacons of the church and every important member of the community standing around the walls of the room. Certain passwords and signs were adopted but it was understood that no meetings were to be called except to meet an emergency. There were no costumes, and no raids were ever made because none were ever necessary. Messages were sent to leading negroes assuring them that we were their frinds as we had always been, and warning them against being deceived and led into any movement against the white people by their false friends, the Carpet-Baggers. A few of those who made themselves especially obnoxious received messages posted on their doors to the effect that for a certain number of days, in order that they might have an opportunity to arrange their business affairs, they would not be disturbed; but that after a fixed date they were likely to find living conditions in that part of the country



neither pleasant nor safe, and they were advised to change their place of residence. None of those thus singled out hesitated to take the advice so kindly given. One of them was our County Treasurer, who left immediately, carrying with him all the money in the treasury amounting to \$20,000.00. Neither he nor the money was ever heard of again.

Other communities where the situation was not so judiciously handled did not fare so well, but had to suffer under the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and their imported leaders for several years. With us things moved along in comparative quiet, with only an occasional visit from the soldiers, until General Grant, thoroughly disgusted with the failure of the Reconstruction governments to reconstruct, or to restore peace and order to the South, withdrew his support from them, whereupon they automatically tottered and fell. Then saying "Let us have peace," he instituted a regime of kindly treatment of the people he had learned to respect from his experience with them on the battlefield, which finally resulted in the establishment of "the just and lasting peace among ourselves" of which Lincoln so eloquently spoke, and which we of the South believe he would have succeeded in establishing at a much earlier day if the hand of the assassin had not stricken him down.



## VII.

# Afterwards

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IT is true that the fires of sectional hate which the war had kindled and which its aftermath of reconstruction had intensified continued to burn fiercely for many long and bitter years. But in this year of our Lord, 1927, they have practically disappeared. Neither our political alignments nor our personal relationship any longer have much to do with geographical boundaries or the points of the compass. In the last thirty years men of the North and men of the South have stood side by side as comrades in two wars, and today are co-operating sympathetically in all lines of business, philanthropy and religion. Our country now recognizes itself as "one and inseparable" to a far greater extent than was ever the case before the Civil War.

Strangely enough the personalities whose influence counted for most in the beginning of this movement for national unity were those who were leaders on both sides in the days of the Civil War. To the part played by Lincoln and Grant I have already referred.



On the other side the most potent influence was that of our great Confederate leader, Robert E. Lee. Sir Frederick Maurice in his book, "Robert E. Lee the Soldier," in which he ranks him as a general above Wellington, has this to say of his attitude and influence after the war: "Splendid as was his career as a general in the field, nothing in his life became him more than his end. His resolute refusal in circumstances of great difficulty and temptation to take part in any of the controversies which the war evolved, his devotion to the success of his work as President of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University), in training young men of the South to forget the quarrels of the past and to be good Americans, all displayed even more truly than did the tests of the battle field, high courage, sincerity of purpose, devotion to principle and nobility of soul. No man took upon himself more earnestly Lincoln's charge, and with real abnegation of self, set himself 'with malice towards none to bind up the nation's wounds'."

It was my privilege to be under him as a student of the College during the last year of his life, and to know something of the influence he exerted on every one of the three hundred students then in attendance who was capable of being influenced for good. It was all of the kind which his military biographer has described, and it was effective in proportion to



the admiration, reverence and affection with which he was regarded by the whole student body.

But we have traveled a long journey, from Mt. Holly to Lexington, much longer than the same journey would be today. Leaving home in August, 1869, my itinerary was as follows: one day by private conveyance to Camden; two days and nights by stage coach to a point on the Mississippi river; one day and night by steamer to Memphis; two days and nights by railroad (the Pullman had not then been invented), to Lynchburg. There, on account of our belated train, we missed connection and had to wait three days for the canal boat to Lexington. It was still "pioneer days" in the matter of travel and transportation.

In the eighty years of its history Mount Holly never more than attained the dimensions of a village. The original pioneers loved their country life and had no desire to congregate in a town. When railroads penetrated the country after the war it was left to one side, and its enterprising young people as they grew up moved to points on the railroads where they built up towns like Hope and Prescott and Gurdon, and re-enforced the older towns like Magnolia, Camden and Eldorado. The last named, the home of "Father" Lacy, grew in three weeks time when oil was discovered from a population of five thousand to twenty-five thousand. In spite of that



the spirit of the pioneers still dominates it. And it is true in nearly all the towns in southwest Arkansas that the leaven of the old Mount Holly Church and School still works, and that a surprising proportion of their most substantial citizens are descendants of the third and fourth generation of those sturdy and heroic men and women who, for just such things as they foresaw and that have come to pass, braved the dangers and hardships of the uninhabited wilderness.

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